

DeGrazia Project



History

Ted DeGrazia was a famous artist who was born in the small mining town of Morenci, Arizona. He lived in Mexico for part of his life, and studied with Diego Rivera. His art finally became popular in the 1960's, but in 1976, he burned more than 100 of his paintings in protest of inheritance tax laws. DeGrazia based his work on Impressionism, and did not draw features on adult faces unless they were religious figures. He did draw every simple feature on the faces of children. He used the bold vibrant colors that you would expect in the art of Mexico. When you observe his work, you see that many of the people were drawn out of geometric shapes: a circle for a head, an oval for a sombrero, a triangle for a shirt or dress and a rectangle for pants.

This lesson is a great way for children to practice drawing various shapes. The lesson will also show a new way of associating shapes with everyday objects.

Procedure

1. Demonstrate drawing shapes on a chalkboard. Have the children start with drawing a circle the size of a quarter in pencil. Boy pictures require, directly under the circle, a small slanted triangle for a shirt and a vertical rectangle for pants. Girl pictures require, directly under the circle, a large slanted triangle for a dress. Both the boy and girl images need smaller triangles for arms.
2. Black pastels can now be distributed. Have the children draw straight sticks around the circle, pointing down. This will be hair.
3. Have the children draw an oval around the head. This will be a sombrero. Have the children color the sombrero yellow.
4. Have each child pick three of their favorite colors and draw and color three circles to represent balloons. Encourage the children to use bright, bold colors. They should then color in the face with a flesh-toned pastel. The clothes should also be colored using bright, bold colors.
5. Color the bottom of the picture green for grass.
6. Distribute blue watercolors. Have the children fill in the remaining white background with blue for the sky.
7. As a finishing touch, use a fine tip black marker and have each artist draw two dots for eyes and a dot for the mouth. Also, draw strings from the bottom of the balloons to the hands of the children in the drawing.
8. Cover the entire artwork with a fixative spray to seal the oil pastels.

Grade Levels:

Adaptable to All Ages

Time Needed:

1 class

Required Materials:

- 8 ½" x 11" art paper
- oil pastels
- fixative spray
- crayons
- watercolor paints or pencils
- paint brushes
- pencils
- fine tip black markers
- examples of Ted DeGrazia's work